

18 *December*

When I don't write is when I have the most to write. If I have a moment's relaxation, I use it to correct proofs, to write letters. I am barely sufficient unto my life, It is not so much the urgency of my occupations as their number and diversity; my mind is completely dislocated by them, My best time in Paris is when I am supposed not to be there. If I cease to write in this notebook for more than three days, it becomes painful for me to go back to it, and the moment I do not pay attention to details, I no longer enjoy noting anything down. Let us force ourselves.

(Raymond Bonheur, whom I saw yesterday, cannot conceive of *forcing* oneself. On the other hand it's my watchword. I want all my branches to be arched, like those the clever gardener torments to urge them to fruit.)

What especially shocked Paul Claudel when, after several years in the Orient, he returned to modern civilization was the waste.

"What!" he exclaimed, "when St. Francis of Assisi found in the mud of a path a bit of crumpled parchment, he picked it up in his hand, smoothed it out, because he had seen writing on it — *writing*, that sacred thing—and look at us, what we do with it today! It really pains me to think of that enormous mass of paper which is covered with printing for one day and then thrown into the garbage-pail. . . . We have not only no more respect for the writing of others, but not even for our own. . . ."

Waste, yes, that is also what spoils for me an evening like yesterday's. Waste of time, of money, of strength — and for what a petty pleasure!

Yet everything would have been all right if it had not been for that sort of obligation we felt (at least some of us) to go and finish out the evening at Maxim's. I had dined (rather pleasantly

too) with Gerard
and Ventura at the Cafe de Paris; it was my first time
there. We met the
J. T. couple and Copeau at the Athenée, where Tristan
Bernard's *Triple-*
patte was being played. On seeing it again, that
delicate play seemed to
me even better.

The interest of the evening was concentrated,
during the intermis-
sions and after the show (at the Bal Tabarin) on
Ventura and Mme T.,
or rather on their polite attentions (the expression is
too weak) for each
other. I am merely noting. To relate it all would be too
long.

Ventura made the greatest efforts to achieve
spontaneity, and she
let her pleasure be seen in the most childlike fashion.
She was charm-
ing, but Mme T. was beautiful; and not only her
features; an odd inner
flame showed through her cheeks!. Etc. > . . There
was the episode of
the shawl; an Egyptian shawl, a scarf of light
material, but weighed
down by a great number of silver sequins; when it
slipped from Mme